

CLAIMS

We claim:

1           1. A method of correlating a purchaser of an electronically-purchased item ("EPI")  
2 with the EPI, said EPI to be subsequently received by said purchaser, comprising:

3           a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate  
4 information is transferred to a seller of said EPI and verification-related digital certificate  
5 information is transferred to said purchaser; and

6           a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said EPI are correlated by requiring  
7 said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before  
8 receiving said EPI and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital  
9 certificate information with said EPI.

1           2. The method as set forth in claim 1, wherein said purchasing step includes at least  
2 the steps of:

3           creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related  
4 digital certificate information; and

5           associating said electronically-readable indicia with said EPI.

1           3. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said verification step comprises:

2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from  
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said EPI;  
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with  
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to  
7 receive the EPI.

4. The method as set forth in claim 3, wherein the EPI is authorized to be released  
to said person attempting to receive the EPI only after the EPI is confirmed to have  
associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding to the  
verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

5. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital  
certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining  
to said purchaser.

6. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said verification-related digital  
certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said  
EPI.

1           7. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said digital certificate  
2 information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said  
3 purchaser and data pertaining to said EPI.

1           8. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1           9. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2 certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1           10. The method as set forth in claim 4, wherein said purchaser-related information  
2 is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1           11. The method as set forth in claim 2, wherein said electronically-readable indicia  
2 comprises bar coding.

1           12. A method of correlating a purchased item to be picked up by a purchaser with  
2 the purchaser of the item, comprising the steps of:

3           transferring indicia of verification-related digital certificate information to the  
4 purchased item;

5 requiring said purchaser to present said verification-related digital certificate  
6 information upon picking up said item; and

7 correlating said purchased item with the purchaser of the item by electronically  
8 comparing said verification-related digital certificate information presented by said  
9 purchaser with said indicia.

1 13. A method of correlating a purchased redeemable ticket (PRD) with the  
2 purchaser of the redeemable ticket, comprising:

3 a purchasing step, wherein purchaser-related financial and digital certificate  
4 information is transferred to a seller of said PRD and verification-related digital certificate  
5 information is transferred to said purchaser; and

6 a verification step, wherein said purchaser and said PRD are correlated by requiring  
7 said purchaser to provide said verification-related digital certificate information before  
8 receiving said PRD and by electronically comparing said verification-related digital  
9 certificate information with said PRD.

1 14. The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said purchasing step includes  
2 at least the steps of:

3 creating an electronically-readable indicia corresponding to said verification-related  
4 digital certificate information; and

5 associating said electronically-readable indicia with said PRD.

1 15. The method as set forth in claim 14, wherein said verification step comprises:  
2 electronically reading said verification-related digital certificate information from  
3 said electronically-readable indicia into a verification system prior to receiving said PRD;  
4 and

5 comparing said read verification-related digital certificate information with  
6 verification-related digital certificate information provided by a person attempting to  
7 receive the PRD.

8 16. The method as set forth in claim 15, wherein the PRD is authorized to be  
9 released to said person attempting to receive the PRD only after the PRD is confirmed to  
10 have associated therewith verification-related digital certificate information corresponding  
11 to the verification-related digital certificate information provided by said receiving party.

1 17. The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital  
2 certificate information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining  
3 to said purchaser.

1           18.    The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said verification-related digital  
2   certificate information comprises a data file containing encrypted data pertaining to said  
3   PRD.

1           19.    The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said digital certificate  
2   information comprises an encrypted data file containing personal data pertaining to said  
3   purchaser and data pertaining to said PRD.

1           20.    The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2   certificate information is provided by data stored on a smart card.

1           21.    The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related digital  
2   certificate information is supplied from data stored on a PDA.

1           22.    The method as set forth in claim 16, wherein said purchaser-related information  
2   is supplied from data stored on a cellular telephone.

1           23.    The method as set forth in claim 13, wherein said electronically-readable  
2   indicia comprises bar coding.